Teamsters denounce "Freedom Convoy" -- Recap of a week of blockades in Detroit

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Date: Sat, 12 Feb 2022 21:00:01 +0000

Colleagues,
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Please see below report from mission DTROT on a week of blockades, including the Detroit-Windsor Ambassador bridge. In addition to Governor Whitmer's statement which received broad coverage earlier this week, note the statement from Teamsters President Jim Hoffa 'denouncing' the so-called "Freedom Convoy" (pasted below).
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Merci,
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Holly
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https://teamster.org/2022/02/teamsters-denounce-freedom-convoy-blockade-at-canadian-border/
10/02/2022

WASHINGTON) – The following is the official statement of Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa regarding the ongoing blockade by the Freedom Convoy protest at the United States-Canada border.

“The Teamsters Union denounces the ongoing Freedom Convoy protest at the Canadian border that continues to hurt workers and negatively impact our economy. The livelihood of working Americans and Canadians in the automotive, agricultural, and manufacturing sectors is threatened by this blockade.

“Our economy is growing under the Biden Administration, and this disruption in international trade threatens to derail the gains we have made. Our members are some of the hardest workers in the country and are being prevented from doing their jobs. The Teamsters call on the organizers of this action to end this protest

and instead, engage in meaningful political discourse with the Canadian government to find a solution."

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DTROT Weekly Advocacy Report: February 7-11, 2022
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Security and Border
Border Blockade
DTROT is engaging extensively with political and business interlocutors around the evolving conditions at two key Canada-US crossings, the Bluewater Bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia and the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor. The Canadian blockades produced significant impacts in Michigan within hours and those impacts and voices calling for a resolution have grown steadily throughout the week. The first closure was on Sunday, February 6 when US-bound traffic was shut down at the Bluewater Bridge due to protests on Canada's Hwy 402. Outbound bridge traffic was closed for about 10 hours, re-opening Sunday evening. Since then traffic has moved at this crossing, however significant delays are being experienced, especially for Canada-bound traffic that is being rerouted from the Ambassador Bridge.
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On Monday, February 7, protesters descended on the roadways to and from the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, slowing then stopping traffic by about 7 p.m. Inbound traffic from the US has remained shut since then, although mid-day Friday brought media reports that one inbound lane may reopen. Outbound traffic to the US across the bridge has been significantly reduced and intermittently closed. In normal times, this bridge handles 7000 trucks per day, with many drivers making 2-3 turns per day, so the closure has produced severe congestion on the Michigan freeway system. As the closure lengthens, industry is reporting manufacturing production disruptions with companies, unions, trade associations issuing calls for a resolution. On Wednesday, February 9, **the Canada-US Business Association (CUSBA)** a Detroit-Windsor based group, published a statement signed by several dozen chambers and groups from both countries calling for a swift and immediate clearing of the Windsor-Detroit Ambassador Bridge blockade and a timely reopening of the bridge. On Thursday, February 10, the Teamsters Union denounced the blockade. Also on Thursday, Governor Whitmer issued a statement on the blockade, calling on Canada to re-open the border. Several Michigan elected officials have commented on social media expressing a range of sentiments. Earlier today, the city of Windsor ON has been granted a court injunction to put an end to the blockade of the Ambassador Bridge. WSHDC & DTROT are coordinating on engagement with political and business stakeholders, as well as facilitating media engagement.

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Call with Senator Peters (D-MI) February 10, 2022: Senator Peters, Chair of Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC), requested a meeting with HOM/Comartin to register his concerns about the economic disruption caused in Michigan by the border closure. Also present at the meeting were Christopher Mulkins, Director, HSGAC; Katie Conley, Aide, HSGAC; and FPDS/Lienhardt and Connell. s.38

s.38

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Call with Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-MI-14) February 11, 2022: HoM/Comartin, accompanied by FPDS/Connell, conducted a meeting at the request of **Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-MI-14)** whose district includes the Ambassador Bridge and Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. Rep. Lawrence reiterated the sentiments expressed in a press release issued by her office the previous afternoon. Just as the call began, news broke that protesters have agreed to open one lane of traffic from US into Canada. HoM/Comartin assured that all levels of government are working together and across party lines to get the border reopened. s.38 s.38 s.38 HoM/Comartin suggested she could share those same concerns with Teamsters representatives given their recent statement denouncing the blockade. s.38 s.38 s.38 HoM noted that US and Canadian authorities regularly exchange information as part of our long-standing security partnership. HoM asked Rep. Lawrence to lend her voice to amplifying the close work between Canadian and the U.S. authorities. The Congresswoman promised to consider this suggestion and noted she would like to meet with the Ambassador.

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Call with Congresswoman Dingell (D-MI-12) February 11, 2022: HoM/Comartin had a short amicable call with **Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12)** in which they discussed the Ontario's state of emergency announcement and the pending injunction request by the City of Windsor. HoM reassured that it is a priority to maintain the vital supply chains that Canada and Michigan depend upon. s.38 s.38

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Call with Detroit Regional Chamber February 10, 2022: HoM/Comartin met with Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce President Baruah and MichAUTO VP Stevens to encourage communication to membership and elected officials that Canada has been a reliable supply partner to the U.S. for energy, manufactured goods, agri-food and more and intends to continue for decades to come. He strongly discourages soundbites to the contrary. DRCC/Baruah committed to communicating to membership and government. HoM advised that all levels of government are working to end this disruptive blockade. Baruah expects a parallel protest in the U.S. to commence as early as this weekend.

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Call with OESA & MEMA February 11, 2022: HoM/Comartin met with Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA) President Fream and parent Motor Equipment Suppliers Association (MEMA) Sr. VP Wilson to discuss the border blockade and the direct impacts to the automotive industry – OEMs and suppliers. HoM/Comartin advised that all levels of government are working to resolve this matter in a non-violent manner. He explained the injunction process. OESA/Fream asked about the likelihood that Prime Minister Trudeau would issue a state of emergency s.38 . In an unofficial poll of about 60 OESA members, as of Feb. 10th 30% were already impacted by the border blockade and this will increase to at least 50% by Monday. OESA Canadian members already preparing force majeure measures. MEMA/Wilson shares HoM/Comartin concerns about mid to long term impacts of this disruption on Canadian supply chain and investment.. MEMA/OESA agreed

to assist with communicating to membership and will include HOM/Comartin's suggestions. MEMA/Wilson to meet with American Trucking Association (ATA) and share Canadian messaging and explain impacts of the protest to ATA members with the goal of discouraging members from supporting the blockade.
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